



US Army Corps
Of Engineers
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: July 1, 2008
Comment Deadline: July 31, 2008
Corps Action ID #: 198200031

RENEWAL OF REGIONAL GENERAL PERMIT

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, WILMINGTON DISTRICT, Post Office Box 1890, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402 hereby proposes the re-issuance of Regional General Permit (GP) 198200031 (NCDOT Bridge Construction, Maintenance and Repair). Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, Paragraph 325, allows the District Engineer to issue regional general permits to authorize activities, which are substantially similar in nature and cause only minimal individual and cumulative environmental impacts.

GP 198200031 (copy attached) authorizes the construction, maintenance, and repair of NCDOT bridges on waters of the United States that are located in the State of North Carolina. The GP also includes authorization of cofferdams, abutments, foundation seals, piers, approach fills, detour fills, box culvert installation and temporary construction and access fills associated with bridge construction. Re-issuance of GP 198200031 is being considered pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The re-issuance of the GP is being considered with the addition of some special and general conditions to be more consistent with the general conditions of the Nationwide Permits. For ease of review, please note special conditions l, o, q and general conditions b, c, d, f, g, and s.

Generally, the decision whether to re-issue this regional general permit will not be made until the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) issues, denies, or waives State certification required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The NCDWQ considers whether the proposed activity will comply with Sections 301, 302, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act. This public notice serves as a request to the NCDWQ for Section 401 certification. A waiver will be deemed to occur if the NCDWQ fails to act on this request for certification within sixty days of the date of the receipt of this notice in the NCDWQ Central Office.

Additional information regarding the Clean Water Act certification may be reviewed at the NCDWQ Central Office, 401 Oversight and Express Permits Unit, 2321 Crabtree Boulevard, Suite 250, Raleigh, North Carolina. Copies of such materials will be furnished to any person requesting copies upon payment of reproduction costs.

All persons wanting to make comments regarding the request for Clean Water Act certification should do so in writing delivered to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), 1628 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1628, on or before **July 24, 2008**, Attention: Mr. John Dorney.

The GP will not be re-issued if any required State or local authorization and/or certification are denied. The GP will not be re-issued until a State coordinated viewpoint is received and reviewed by this agency. Recipients of this notice are encouraged to furnish comments on factors of concern represented by the above agencies directly to the respective agency, with a copy furnished to the Corps of Engineers.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. It is the District Engineer's initial determination that the proposed re-issuance of the GP will not adversely affect EFH or associated fisheries managed by the South Atlantic or Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The required EFH assessment will be incorporated into the EA that will be prepared for the GP.

The decision, whether to re-issue the GP, will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts that the proposed activity may have on the public interest requires a careful weighing of all those factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits that may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to authorize a proposal, and if so the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur, are therefore decided by the outcome of the general balancing process. That decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and use of important resources. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal must be considered including the cumulative effects of it. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards and flood plain values (according to Executive Order 11988), land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Subject to all applicable guidelines or criteria, a permit will be granted unless the District Engineer decides that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes and other interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed action. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to decide whether to re-issue, modify or not re-issue the regional general permit. To make this decision; comments are used to assess potential impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments will be considered in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to decide the need for a public hearing and to decide the public interest of the proposed action.

Written comments pertinent to the renewal of this general permits will be received in this office, Attention: Richard K. Spencer, until 4:30 p.m., **July 31, 2008**. It is requested that you communicate the foregoing information concerning the proposed regional general permit to any persons known by you to be interested.

Additional information concerning this regional general permit can be obtained from Richard K. Spencer, Regulatory Division, Wilmington District Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Post Office Box 1890, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890 or telephone (910) 251-4172.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 1890
Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890

Regional General Permit No. 198200031
Name of Permittee: General Public
Effective Date: September 1, 2008
Expiration Date: August 31, 2013

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
REGIONAL GENERAL PERMIT**

A regional general permit (RGP) to perform work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States and waters of the United States, upon recommendation of the Chief of Engineers, pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), is hereby modified and re-issued by authority of the Secretary of the Army by the

District Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer District, Wilmington
Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 1890
Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890

TO AUTHORIZE THE DISCHARGE OF DREDGED OR FILL MATERIAL IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING WETLANDS, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF BRIDGES, INCLUDING COFFERDAMS, ABUTMENTS, FOUNDATION SEALS, PIERS, APPROACH FILLS, DETOUR FILLS, BOX CULVERT INSTALLATION AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESS FILLS, IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES AS PART OF WORK CONDUCTED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NCDOT) OR OTHER STATE, FEDERAL OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY, IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

1. Special Conditions.

a. **Written confirmation that the proposed work complies with this RGP must be received from the Wilmington District Engineer prior to the commencement of any work.** To enable this determination to be made, the permittee must furnish the Wilmington District Engineer a pre-construction notification with the following information:

- (1) A map indicating the location of the work.

(2) Plans of the proposed work showing all pertinent structures, elevations, dimensions and quantities of materials and locations of all structures and/or fill in wetlands or waterward of the normal/high water elevation contours.

(3) A brief discussion of the affected aquatic resources, including streams and wetlands. The discussion shall include the identification and types of vegetation present.

(4) Approximate commencement and completion dates.

(5) A description of methods to be employed to avoid and/or minimize permanent and temporary impacts to aquatic resources caused by the proposed work.

(6) Plans, including timetables and techniques, for construction, stabilization and removal of all unavoidable temporary fills.

(7) Names and addresses of adjoining property owners.

b. In the case of fills of one acre or less, including permanent approach fills, detour fills and fills associated with culvert installation, the Corps of Engineers' Project Manager will determine, after appropriate onsite visits and review of plans, if the impacts on aquatic resources, including streams and wetlands, are likely to be such as to require review by Federal and State agencies. If it is determined that impacts are minimal or can be made minimal by changes agreed to by the applicant, a letter of authorization to proceed will be provided. If it is determined that review by Federal and State agencies is necessary to fully evaluate impacts, copies of all plans and materials will be forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). These agencies will furnish comments to the Wilmington District Engineer within thirty (30) days.

c. In cases of fills greater than one acre, copies of all plans and materials will be forwarded to the USFWS, the NMFS, the EPA and the NCDENR. These agencies will furnish comments to the Wilmington District Engineer in thirty (30) days. In cases of land disturbing activities comprising more than one acre, a Sedimentation/Erosion Control Plan will be filed with the North Carolina Division of Land Resources, Land Quality Section, thirty (30) days prior to commencing work.

d. Where work is proposed within the twenty (20) coastal counties, as defined by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, the applicant shall forward a copy of the pre-construction notification to:

**National Marine Fisheries Service
101 Pivers Island Road
Beaufort, North Carolina 28516**

The counties in which this condition applies are:

Bertie	Carteret	Dare	New Hanover	Pender
Beaufort	Chowan	Gates	Onslow	Perquimans
Brunswick	Craven	Hertford	Pamlico	Tyrrell
Camden	Currituck	Hyde	Pasquotank	Washington

e. In the event that any Federal agency maintains an objection or any required State authorization is outstanding, no notice to proceed will be given until objections are resolved and State authorizations are issued.

f. No work will proceed until after the applicant has received written notice to proceed from the Wilmington District Engineer. This notice may include additional conditions and/or restrictions. Copies of the notice to proceed will be furnished to the USFWS, the NMFS, the EPA and the NCDENR with a brief description of the work, including the area of wetlands affected and the quantity of fill material.

g. Upon completion of any work authorized by this RGP, all temporary fills will be completely removed and the area reestablished as a wetland by restoring natural hydrology and native vegetation. Stream contours and riparian vegetation will be reestablished upon the removal of temporary culverts. In such instances, a restoration plan will be submitted to the Wilmington District Engineer for approval. Information in the restoration plan will be in accordance with special condition j. below.

h. Appropriate soil and erosion control measures must be established and maintained during construction. All fills, temporary and permanent, must be adequately stabilized at the earliest practicable date to prevent erosion of fill material into adjacent waters or wetlands.

i. In cases where new alignment approaches are to be constructed and the existing wetland approach fill is to be abandoned and no longer to be maintained as a roadway, the abandoned fill shall be removed and the area reestablished as a wetland. In such instances, a restoration plan will be submitted to the Wilmington District Engineer for approval. Information in the restoration plan will be in accordance with special condition j. below.

j. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, must be minimized or avoided to the maximum extent practicable. In reviewing an activity, the Wilmington District Engineer will first determine whether the activity will result in more than minimal adverse environmental affects. For activities that are determined to have more than minimal impacts, compensatory mitigation will be required. To expedite the process, the applicant will provide a mitigation plan with the request for authorization. Site specific mitigation proposals will include, but are not necessarily limited to, a description of work, a schedule of work and a monitoring plan, and they will be in accordance with currently approved Wilmington District and/or Corps-wide mitigation guidelines. The applicant may propose other forms of mitigation, such as mitigation bank credits or in-lieu fee mitigation with the notification, which in some situations and at the discretion of the Wilmington District, may be considered acceptable mitigation.

k. Activities in any North Carolina designated “Mountain Trout Waters” must comply with all pH, temperature and turbidity criteria established for such waters by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and/or the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ). Work that may result in the sedimentation of trout waters will generally be prohibited from October 15 to April 15, of any year, to avoid impacts on trout spawning.

l. Before discharging dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, in the twenty-five (25) mountain counties of North Carolina that contain trout waters, the applicant will obtain and provide a letter of comments and recommendations from the NCWRC on the proposed activities. A discussion of alternatives to working in the mountain trout waters and why alternatives were not selected, and a plan to provide compensatory mitigation for all unavoidable adverse impacts to the mountain trout waters shall also be submitted with the letter from NCWRC. To facilitate coordination with the NCWRC, the proponent may provide a copy of the notification to the NCWRC concurrent with the notification to the District Engineer. The NCWRC will respond both to the proponent and directly to the Corps of Engineers.

The applicant should contact NCWRC in the following NC Trout Counties at:

Mr. Ron Linville Western Piedmont Region Coordinator 3855 Idlewild Road Kernersville, NC 27284-9180 Telephone: (336) 769-9453	Counties		
	Alleghany	Caldwell	Watauga
	Ashe	Mitchell	Wilkes
	Avery	Stokes	
	Burke	Surry	

Mr. Dave McHenry Mountain Region Coordinator 20830 Great Smoky Mtn. Expressway Waynesville, NC 28786 Telephone: (828) 452-2546 Fax: (828) 452-7772	Counties		
	Buncombe	Henderson	Polk
	Cherokee	Jackson	Rutherford
	Clay	Macon	Swain
	Graham	Madison	Transylvania
	Haywood	McDowell	Yancey

m. This permit does not authorize the use of culverts in areas designated as anadromous fish spawning areas by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) or the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC).

n. Discharges into Waters of the United States designated by either the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) or the NCWRC as anadromous fish spawning area are prohibited during the period between February 15 and June 30, without prior written approval from NCDMF or NCWRC and the Corps. Discharges into waters of the United States designated by NCDMF as primary nursery areas and discharges into waters of the United States designated by NCWRC as inland nursery areas shall be coordinated with NCDMF and NCWRC prior to being authorized by this RGP. Coordination with NCDMF and NCWRC may result in a

required construction moratorium during periods of significant biological productivity or critical life stages.

The Applicant should contact:

**NC Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557
Telephone 252-726-7021
or 800-682-2632**

**North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Habitat Conservation Program Manager
1721 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1721
Telephone (919) 733-7638**

o. No activity may result in substantial permanent disruption of the movement of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the waterbody, including those species that normally migrate through the area. The dimension, pattern, and profile of the stream above and below a pipe or culvert should not be modified by widening the stream channel or by reducing the depth of the stream in connection with the construction activity. The width, height, and gradient of a proposed opening should be such as to pass the average historical low flow and spring flow without adversely altering flow velocity. Spring flow should be determined from gage data, if available. In the absence of such data, bankfull flow can be used as a comparable level.

p. This permit generally allows the permanent installation of culverts to 100 feet in length. For culverts longer than 100 feet, the proposed application will be closely evaluated to determine if unacceptable impacts on movement of aquatic organisms would result. In such cases, approval may not be provided.

q. If the project is located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), then all pipe and culvert inverts will be buried at least one foot below normal bed elevation when they are placed within the Public Trust Area of Environmental Concern (AEC) and/or the Estuarine Waters AEC as designated by CAMA, and/or all streams appearing as blue lines on United States Geological Survey (USGS) quad sheets. If the project is not located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by CAMA, then culvert inverts will be buried at least one foot below the bed of the stream for culverts greater than 48 inches in diameter. Culverts 48 inches in diameter or less shall be buried or placed on the stream bed as practicable and appropriate to maintain aquatic passage, and every effort shall be made to maintain the existing channel slope. The potential for destabilization of the channel and head cutting upstream should be considered in the placement of the culvert. A waiver from the depth specifications in this condition may be requested in writing. The waiver will only be issued if it can be demonstrated that the impacts of complying with this condition would result in more adverse impacts to the aquatic environment. Culverts placed in wetlands do not have to be buried.

r. All activities authorized by this RGP shall, to the extent practicable, be conducted "in the dry", with barriers installed between work areas and aquatic habitat to protect that habitat from cement or other pollutants. Where concrete is utilized, measures will be taken to prevent live or fresh concrete, including bags of uncured concrete, from coming into contact with waters of the

state until the concrete has hardened. Water in the work area will be pumped to holding and settling ponds as practicable, and water will not be allowed to re-enter the water column until decanted.

s. If the project authorized by this RGP is proposed by a Federal or State agency, and is located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by the CAMA, then prior to project initiation the proponent must obtain a determination of consistency with the state's coastal management program from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM). A copy of the state's consistency determination must be provided to the appropriate Wilmington District Regulatory Office at the following address:

Wilmington Regulatory Field Office
P.O. Box 1890
Wilmington, NC 28402

Washington Regulatory Field Office
P.O. Box 1000
Washington, NC 27889

The state's consistency determination will be conveyed in the form of a CAMA permit if the project is located within a designated CAMA Area of Environmental Concern (AEC), and will be conveyed in the form of a Consistency Determination letter from DCM if the project is not located within a designated CAMA AEC.

t. No work shall be authorized by the RGP within the twenty coastal counties, as defined by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, without prior consultation with NOAA Fisheries. For each activity reviewed by the Corps of Engineers where it is determined that the activity may affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Federally managed species, an EFH Assessment shall be prepared by the applicant and forwarded to the Corps of Engineers and NOAA Fisheries for review and comment prior to authorization of work.

u. All work will comply with Water Quality Certification No. _____, issued by the NCDWQ on _____.

v. The activity must be designed to maintain preconstruction downstream flow conditions (e.g., location, capacity, and flow rates). Furthermore, the activity must not permanently restrict or impede the passage of normal or expected high flows and the structure or discharge of dredged or fill material must withstand expected high flows

2. General Conditions

a. All activities authorized by this RGP that involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States will be consistent with applicable water quality standards, effluent limitations and standards of performance, prohibitions, pre-treatment standards and management practices established pursuant to the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) and applicable State and local law. If the proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, prior to the commencement of any work, the applicant will satisfy the NCDWQ regarding the need for a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

b. All activities authorized by this RGP that involve the use of concrete as a building material, measures will be taken to prevent live or fresh concrete, including bags of uncured concrete, from coming into contact with waters of the state until the concrete has hardened.

c. To the maximum extent practicable, the pre-construction course, condition, capacity, and location of open waters must be maintained for each activity, including stream channelization and storm water management activities, except as provided below. The activity must be constructed to withstand expected high flows. The activity must not restrict or impede the passage of normal or high flows. The activity may alter the pre-construction course, condition, capacity, and location of open waters if it benefits the aquatic environment (e.g., stream restoration or relocation activities).

d. All activities authorized by this RGP that involve the use of riprap material for bank stabilization, the following measures shall be applied:

(1) Filter cloth must be placed underneath the riprap as an additional requirement of its use in North Carolina waters.

(2) The placement of riprap shall be limited to the areas depicted on submitted work plan drawings.

(3) The riprap material shall be clean and free from loose dirt or any pollutant except in trace quantities that would not have an adverse environmental effect.

(4) It shall be of a size sufficient to prevent its movement from the authorized alignment by natural forces under normal conditions.

(5) The riprap material shall consist of clean rock or masonry material such as, but not limited to, granite, marl, or broken concrete.

(6) A waiver from the specifications in this general condition may be requested in writing. The waiver will only be issued if it can be demonstrated that the impacts of complying with this Regional condition would result in greater adverse impacts to the aquatic environment.

e. There will be no unreasonable interference with navigation or the right of the public to riparian access by the existence or use of activities authorized by this RGP.

f. The activity must comply with applicable FEMA approved state or local floodplain management requirements.

g. Heavy equipment working in wetlands or mudflats must be placed on mats, or other measures must be taken to minimize soil disturbance.

h. A permittee, upon receipt of written notice from the Wilmington District Engineer of failure to comply with the terms or conditions of this RGP, will, within 60 days, without expense

to the U.S. Government, and in such manner as the Wilmington District Engineer may direct, affect compliance with the terms and conditions or return the worksite to a pre-work condition.

i. The permittee must make every reasonable effort to perform the work authorized herein in a manner so as to minimize any adverse impact on fish, wildlife and natural environmental values.

j. The permittee must perform the work authorized herein in a manner so as to minimize any degradation of water quality. The activity will be conducted in such a manner as to prevent a significant increase in turbidity outside the area of construction or construction-related discharge. Increases such that the turbidity in the water body is 50 NTU's or less in all rivers not designated as trout waters by the North Carolina Division of Environmental Management (NCDWM), 25 NTU's or less in all saltwater classes and in all lakes and reservoirs, and 10 NTU's or less in trout waters, are not considered significant.

k. The permittee will permit the Wilmington District Engineer or his representative to make periodic inspections at any time deemed necessary in order to assure that the activity is being performed or maintained in strict accordance with the Special and General Conditions of this permit.

l. This RGP **does not** convey any rights, either in real estate or material, or any exclusive privileges; and it does not authorize any injury to property or invasion of rights or any infringement of Federal, State or local laws or regulations, nor does it obviate the requirement to obtain State or local assent required by law for the activity authorized herein. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to, a Dredge and/or Fill Permit (N.C.G.S. 113-229), a CAMA Permit (N.C.G.S. 113A-118), an Easement to Fill (N.C.G.S. 146-12) and a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

m. Authorization provided by this RGP may be modified, suspended or revoked in whole or in part if the Wilmington District Engineer, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, determines that such action would be in the best public interest. Unless subject to modification, suspension or revocation, the term of this RGP shall be five years. Any modification, suspension or revocation of this authorization will not be the basis for any claim for damages against the U.S. Government.

n. This RGP does not authorize the interference with any existing or proposed Federal project and the permittee will not be entitled to compensation for damages or injury to the structures or work authorized herein which may be caused by or results from existing or future operations undertaken by the United States in the public interest.

o. This RGP will not be applicable to proposed construction when the Wilmington District Engineer determines that the proposed activity would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and determines that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared.

p. This RGP will not be applicable to proposed construction when the Wilmington District Engineer determines, after any necessary investigations, that the proposed activity would adversely affect areas that possess historic, cultural, scenic, conservation or recreational values. Application of this exemption applies to:

(1) Rivers named in Section 3 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (15 U.S.C. 1273), those proposed for inclusion as provided by Sections 4 and 5 of the Act and wild, scenic and recreational rivers established by State and local entities.

(2) Historic, cultural or archeological sites listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

(3) Sites included in or determined eligible for listing in the National Registry of Natural Landmarks.

(4) Endangered or threatened species or habitat of such species as determined by the Secretaries of Interior or Commerce and concerned in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531).

(5) NOAA designated marine sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and coral reefs.

q. Permittees are advised that activities in or near a floodway may be subject to the National Flood Insurance Program, which prohibits any activities, including fill within a floodway that results in any increase in base flood elevations.

r. At his discretion, the Wilmington District Engineer may determine that this RGP will not be applicable to a specific construction proposal. In such case, the procedure for processing an individual permit in accordance with 33 CFR 325 will be available.

s. Any authorized structure or fill shall be properly maintained, including maintenance to ensure public safety.

t. The discharge of dredged or fill material shall consist of suitable material free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

John E. Pulliam, Jr.
Colonel, U. S. Army
District Commander